

## The 2002 Backcountry Season: Its Importance...Its Significance...The Program

Before entering this program I was a lost drifter—wandering—searching for reason, sauntering for enlightenment, asking questions... Why? What is this life all about? I was like many of my country's youth... a product of divorce and abuse, a young man with the talent, without a guide, controlled by the media, by the alcohol, the occasional fast food drive thru. Trying, but quitting...seeing blind. A college student—4 years and no degree.

I enlisted [in the Backcountry Trails Program] to gain self-motivation, self-security and desire; a journey, an expedition, discipline, back breaking labor, camaraderie, love, getting dirty, a scholarship, to ascend to the rank of the warrior poet, to make a dream a reality, to save our dying lands, to tread where few have the opportunity, examine society from the outside, to cherish the wilderness.

The Backcountry Trails crews of the California Conservation Corps presented me all this and so much more. A challenge. It turned me into a magnanimous man, confident, physically strong, a brutal work ethic, ostentatious mental toughness, the notion that I can achieve anything. The American Dream is alive and breathing and kicking in this body. It flows through the bloodstream. Nefarious intentions removed. Pride and love for my country present.

Keep the program intact. Lobby. Let it remain. My generation and the ones to come will thank you. The experience is powerful. Venerating. A chance for us to grow, prosper and live.

Jeff Morris, Yosemite I / Trinity Alps Crew, 2002